

Wellnet

Are you working to improve health and well-being through community projects in London?

Wellnet is the Well London learning network aimed at connecting, inspiring and motivating all those working in health and well-being promotion across London.

Wellnet shares fresh ideas for boosting well-being through community-led activities.



Delegates discussing community engagement at the Communities in Control event, September 2008

"Every borough should have a drawing shed. If I could come here and draw every week I'd sort stuff out that I can't do in other ways. It makes me feel calm"

Waltham Forest participant



CASE STUDY THE DRAWING SHED

Hoe Street, Waltham Forest

Project partner: Arts Council England

AIMS

The drawing shed set out to positively promote mental well-being through art. It was aimed at a diverse range of participants to help them connect at a deeper level with the drawing process and help them experience new ways of expressing feelings, ideas and thoughts.

APPROACH

The drawing shed was constructed in the cafe garden of the YMCA so that residents could see it arrive into the world! It was also wheeled around the community and got people talking and drawing together.

At each venue, the users took part in and helped shape a drawing workshop, which embraced the overarching aim of being exploratory, physical and fun.

People could choose a level of involvement (eg the style or amount of time spent), with support and encouragement from the project team.

INITIAL RESULTS

- **The drawing shed** was able to attract a mixed audience to interact with it as an architectural space/studio for drawing. Users included a wide range of ages including young people with disabilities.

- **Feedback** has shown an appetite for this kind of project to continue in the community.

- **Strong relationships** of trust were built up – particularly with some of the residents at the YMCA.

- **Increased confidence.** At the end of the Open Day, a group of four male residents spontaneously organised a 'crit' with a member of the YMCA staff – exploring the inspiration for a particular drawing and sharing this experience between themselves openly and comfortably and in front of others.

- **Community cohesion.** Some of these residents came back several times to help push the drawing shed around their community and meet people on the estate.



Well London

update 2010

Who's it for?

All those who work across London to promote community well-being. Community residents, leaders and volunteers are especially encouraged to join our network!

How does it work?

Wellnet shares information through:

- **Wellnet events**

Six events per year offer a useful mix of high-level learning plus practical ways it can be used at community level.

- **Wellnet website and other tools**

Online resources including case studies, latest policy, guidance and useful tools.

- **Wellnet bulletin**

Keep up to date with the latest news, events and resources from Well London and wider health and well-being issues.



Sign up to Wellnet for:

- Invitations to our free Wellnet events programme
- Wellnet bulletin, resources and publications
- Wellnet toolkit to include case studies plus top tips, tools and techniques

For more on Wellnet or to sign up, go to:
www.london.gov.uk/welllondon/projects/wellnet or contact
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For more Well London case studies including this one go to: www.london.gov.uk/welllondon/casestudies

Well London gets results!

What is Well London?

The Well London programme, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, works in partnership at a very local level in twenty of London's most deprived neighbourhoods. Well London is increasing physical activity and healthy eating, supporting culture and creativity, improving open spaces and promoting positive mental well-being. We are achieving this through a combination of integrated community development projects and strategic influence. It runs from 2007–2011.

Well London is different in three ways:

- Our Community development approach empowers local people and puts them at the heart of the local programmes. It makes sure that the activities are based on their needs.
- Our robust evaluation framework will allow us to measure the effectiveness of the programme compared with twenty similar comparison areas.
- Well London brings together a proven track record of local partnership delivery with strategic influence.

What's happening?

Well London is running 14 projects across the capital. Eight are based on the Well London themes and you can find more details across the page.

Our six 'Heart of the Community' projects are increasing community knowledge, skills and aspirations and building individual and community confidence across all the target areas to meet the specific needs of each community.

They are already producing results with evidence of increased confidence, engagement and employment opportunities.



Physical activity

Activate London is getting thousands of people more active by engaging them in sport and active recreation. The 'Activator Training' programme is helping people become more active themselves and act as catalysts for change across their communities.

Activators promote active living opportunities and work with local people to identify and develop activities that people enjoy and value.

"Now I have an aim and objectives on how to achieve it. This is a long way away from where I was nine months ago when I lived in isolation with a low self-esteem"

Jocelyne, Changing Minds participant

"Pleasant and sociable activity - promotes a community spirit which is otherwise limited in this area of Croydon"

Mary Quinn, Croydon, Line Dancing



"The sessions have really motivated me to lead a new and healthy life. From exercising regularly to healthy choices when it comes to food."

Women's Aerobics Session, White City



Healthy spaces

Well London is improving the quality of local spaces and is encouraging a wider range of people to make more use of them. Activities have included allotments, community gardens, wildlife walks and film projects. See the Lansbury Gardens case study.

Culture and tradition

Well London is developing partnerships between local people, artists and arts organisations and community groups to bring creativity to the heart of healthy living. People are working together to tackle local issues and to increase access to London's unique cultural offer.



"I feel more confident now, and not so anxious about my children, and realise healthy eating is crucial to their long term and short term health."

A cook and eat course participant

Mental health

The best way to build flourishing communities and promote well-being is for each of us to learn more about what we can do to maintain good mental health throughout our lives. Well London has three projects that are enabling people to take positive steps in their own lives and in their local neighbourhoods.

DIY Happiness uses creative techniques to find out what really makes us happy.

Mental well-being impact assessment (MWIA) trains community members and professionals to identify potential impacts that new projects could have on mental well-being.

Changing Minds has trained 33 people with direct experience of mental ill-health to increase understanding and reduce stigma in their communities.



"Gardening helps keep the aches and pains away and gives me some space to think"

Westminster gardening club member

"Since making changes, I've sold more fruit and vegetables in one day than I usually do in a whole week"

Salam, Costcutter, Tower Hamlets



Healthy eating

Eatwell is helping people learn more about the benefits of healthy eating for physical and mental health through gaining practical cooking skills. Community feasts bring people together to celebrate different traditions through food.

Buywell is making it easier to buy healthy, affordable, sustainable food in local shops. It is supporting local people and businesses. Projects include community-led food co-ops and box schemes, mobile food stores, healthy café menus and new fresh produce displays for convenience stores.



CASE STUDY LANSBURY GARDENS

Limehouse, Tower Hamlets
Project partner: Groundwork

AIMS

This project aimed at engaging a wide range of local people in a gardening group at the Hind Grove Community Centre garden to improve and build on their mental well being, physical activity and healthy eating choices.

APPROACH

Residents on the Hind Grove Estate were invited to adopt a huge 'grow bag' in the garden – a bag full of compost for growing plants, fruit and vegetables. Groundwork's community gardeners initially made links with the Hind Grove Community Centre and the Housing Association, Poplar HARCA. By working with these local organisations and talking directly with the residents themselves they were able to gain enough interest to start working together on a regular basis. When the grow bags arrived and were planted there was even more interest. Sometimes it takes a bit of visible action to get people's attention.

INITIAL RESULTS

Getting together every week has helped to promote a better understanding of healthy eating, offers a valuable space for socialising with friends and neighbours as well as making the estate a greener, more attractive place to live and to encourage gentle exercise.

An early evaluation showed that:

- 85% of participants feel they are making healthier eating choices.
- 85% of participants feel they have better access to healthy food.
- 85% of participants are involved in weekly physical activity.
- 85% of participants indicated that taking part in the gardening sessions has improved their mental wellbeing.

In April 2009 the group were formally constituted and are now incredibly active and successful locally.



For more Well London case studies including this one go to www.london.gov.uk/welllondon/casestudies

Find out more at www.london.gov.uk/welllondon